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ABSTRACT

This final report discusses the activities and outcomes of the early intervention interdisciplinary preservice program at the University of Oregon. This master's degree program used both "measurement of" and "reflection about" preservice efforts to address important questions regarding program effectiveness and identify important program characteristics related to positive student outcomes. Students in the program completed a common core of foundation and early intervention courses, participated in a variety of early intervention practica experiences, and attended a weekly practica-methods seminar. A competency-based approach was used to organize the course work content, plan practica activities, and direct, monitor, and evaluate students activities. The general goal of this competency-based personnel preparation program was to prepare students from a variety of backgrounds to provide quality intervention services to infants and young children at risk, or who have disabilities, and their families. Program evaluation data indicate students and supervisors recognized growth in knowledge and skills across competency areas. The report describes the program, reviews the specific evaluation tools used to measure program effectiveness, and shares the evaluation results across a 5-year period. In addition, the report highlights program components that were considered to be critical in relationship to positive student outcomes. (Contains 26 references.) (CR)

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Master's Personnel Prep Program
Early Intervention Preservice Preparation: Program Evaluation and Reflections

FINAL REPORT

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II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although the literature contains descriptions of various model early intervention personnel preparation programs, data that address program outcomes continue to be scarce. This master's degree program used both "measurement of" and "reflection-about" preservice efforts, to address important questions regarding program effectiveness and identify important program characteristics related to positive student outcomes. This final report addresses the topic of personnel preparation program evaluation by (a) describing the Early Intervention interdisciplinary preservice program at the University of Oregon, (b) discussing the program's evaluation areas, (c) reviewing the specific evaluation tools and (d) sharing the evaluation results across a 5-year period. Further, we highlight program components that were considered to be critical in relationship to positive student outcomes.

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IV. PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

The early intervention literature contains descriptions of various efforts designed to prepare personnel to deliver quality services to infants and young children who are at risk or disabled and their families (Hanson & Brekken, 1991; Klein & Campbell, 1990; Mallory, 1983; McAfee, 1987; Miranda & Andrews, 1994; Rowan, McCollum, & Thorp, 1993). These descriptions focus on discussions of program rationales and models or approaches employed, but rarely do these reports contain any but the most general type of evaluation data related to program efforts or student outcomes.

Winton (1996) asserts that evaluation data regarding personnel preparation issues are needed to accurately respond to policy makers at the state and federal level who are posing questions about efficacy of personnel preparation efforts. Given that state and federal monies continue to fund early intervention personnel preparation efforts, comprehensive quantitative and qualitative evaluation data that support the effectiveness of these programs should be made available in the literature.

Why does the literature continue to lack studies that examine the outcomes of personnel preparation programs? The answer seems relatively straightforward. Personnel preparation evaluation is difficult to complete for several reasons. First, there exist few, if any, broadly accepted tools or procedures for measuring the effectiveness of personnel preparation efforts. Developing measures with sound psychometric properties is a major research effort, which most programs have neither the expertise nor financial resources to conduct. Second, over time, program procedures and content

change, either to keep pace with the field or shift to be responsive to student/program feedback or both. Significant change in program content or procedures makes the consolidation of evaluation data across years questionable. Finally, to conduct reliable and in-depth evaluation requires time, expertise, and materials that often exceed the resources available to personnel preparation programs. For example, the collection of student performance data over time is particularly important but also particularly costly in terms of human resources. These problems only begin to address why so few evaluation data on the effectiveness of personnel preparation efforts are available in the literature.

This final report describes a master's early intervention personnel preparation program and evaluation results from the University of Oregon. Specifically, evaluation instruments, evaluation data, and qualitative highlights are discussed. Prior to discussing program evaluation tools and evaluation data, a brief description of the personnel preparation approach, including information regarding the program's theoretical framework, course work, practica activities and supervision model is provided.

V. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The course work, practica activities, and supervision model of the Early Intervention Master's Degree programs were guided by five major perspectives or orientations. First, a developmental perspective provided students a general overview of how development proceeds across behavioral domains (Garwood, 1983). This perspective is tempered with the knowledge that children who are at risk or disabled may deviate significantly from typical growth and behavioral patterns, therefore requiring individualized tailoring of intervention content.

Second, the transactional perspective that addresses the reciprocal exchanges between children and their social and physical environment was a focus of this program (Sameroff & Chandler, 1975). Students were encouraged to attend to the reciprocal exchanges between the caregiver and the child, as well as the larger social context in which the child and caregiver reside (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1988; Dunst, Trivette, Starnes, Hamby, & Gordon, 1993; Minuchin, 1974).

Third, a family-guided perspective stressed the importance of including family members as genuine partners in all phases of assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Emphasis was placed on the importance of recognizing the resources, stresses, values, and desires of family members while developing assessment and intervention plans.

Fourth, an activity-based orientation was emphasized to help students learn to arrange environmental contingencies to produce change in children and family members. This orientation stressed the importance of utilizing a broad array of

intervention strategies that are naturalistic, functional, child-directed, and generalizable.

Finally, this program used an interdisciplinary approach, which recognizes the diverse needs and backgrounds seen in young children and their families. This approach instilled in students the importance of developing knowledge and skills to collaborate across disciplines and agencies as no single discipline/agency can be relied on to formulate and deliver comprehensive and appropriate services.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAINING MODEL

Early Intervention Master's students completed a common core of foundation and early intervention courses, participated in a variety of early intervention practica experiences and attended a weekly practica-methods seminar. A competency-based approach was used to organize the course work content; plan practica activities, and direct, monitor, and evaluate student activities. The general goal of this competency-based personnel preparation program was to prepare students from a variety of backgrounds to provide quality intervention services to infants and young children who are at-risk or disabled and their families.

Curriculum Competencies

The curriculum of this personnel preparation program was designed to ensure students attained mastery in important early intervention competency areas. The students worked toward achieving objectives across eight required and two optional competency areas. Each competency area contained both knowledge and skill objectives. Acquisition of knowledge competencies was assured through satisfactory completion of

prescribed course work, whereas skill competencies were achieved through satisfactory completion of practica requirements. Table 1 contains the early intervention competencies that guided course work objectives, and practica activities.

Course Work and Practica

As can be seen in Table 2, the core course work that was completed by students included courses on classroom and behavior management, tests and measurement in education, a general course on disabilities, a course on student supports, and four early intervention specialty courses. These courses were considered vital in providing the student with a conceptual foundation and knowledge base. This program considered correct application of knowledge, or skill acquisition, as important as knowledge. Therefore, a special emphasis was placed on the experience and skills gained through student involvement in a weekly practicum methods seminar and daily practica activities.

Each term students were required to spend a minimum of 12 hours per week in a practicum placement. Students participated in both on- and off-campus practica site activities to ensure they were adequately prepared to provide quality intervention to children with a variety of disabilities and learn how to effectively collaborate with team members. On-campus practicum sites allowed varied opportunities such as the (a) Activity-Based Collaboration Model Demonstration Project, an integrated center- and home-based program for infants and toddlers and their families, (b) Parent and Child Education Program, an integrated child care facility that provides services to young children with developmental delays and their families, (c) Child Development and Rehabilitation Center, a diagnostic and evaluation clinic which provides comprehensive

Table 1. Early Intervention Program Competencies

1.0 Foundations in Early Intervention (required)
The early interventionist is able to discuss the implications of federal and state legislative decisions, regulation, policies and procedures, and ethics affecting the profession of early intervention.

2.0 Typical and Atypical Development (required)
The early interventionist is able to demonstrate knowledge across developmental domains of the sequence and range of typical child development, the characteristics of delayed development, and the patterns of atypical development associated with pediatric disabilities.

3.0 Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Assessment (required)
The early interventionist is able to select, administer, summarize results in writing, and interpret to parents/caregivers and professionals a comprehensive assessment of infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

4.0 Family (required)
The early interventionist is able to select, administer, summarize results in writing, and interpret to professionals a family guided assessment to identify the families resources, priorities and concerns important to the development of their at-risk or disabled infant, toddler, or preschool child.

5.0 Intervention (required)
The early interventionist is able to design a family-guided early intervention program for infants, toddlers, and preschool children at-risk or with a disability and their families.

6.0 Intervention (Implementation) (required)
The early interventionist is able to implement a family-guided early intervention program for infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

7.0 Intervention (Evaluation) (required)
The early interventionist is able to evaluate a family-guided early intervention program for infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

8.0 Interdisciplinary and Interagency Collaboration (required)
The early interventionist is able to assume the roles and responsibilities of an interdisciplinary team member, a case manager, a supervisor, a consultant, a community liaison, and an educator.

9.0 Research (optional)
The early interventionist is able to demonstrate knowledge of current research related to the profession of early intervention.

10.0 Administration (optional)
The early interventionist is able to demonstrate effective management and leadership skills in the administration of an early intervention program.

Table 2. Program: Course Work and Practica Requirements by Term

Fall	*Winter*	*Spring*	*Summer*
Behavior Management 3 credits	Family-Guided Early Intervention 3 credits	Law & Governance in Education 4 credits	Assessment & Evaluation 3 credits
Foundations in Early Childhood & Early Intervention 3 credits	Curriculum in Early Childhood & Early Intervention 3 credits		Advanced Foundations of Disability 3 credits
Tests & Measurement in Education 3 credits	Student Supports 3 credits		
Early Intervention Practicum 3 credits	Early Intervention Practicum 3 credits	Final Supervised Field Experience 9 credits or Early Intervention Practicum 3 credits	Early Intervention Practicum 3 credits
Early Intervention Practicum Methods Seminar 3 credits	Early Intervention Practicum Methods Seminar 3 credits	Early Intervention Practicum Methods Seminar 2 credits	Early Intervention Practicum Methods Seminar 2 credits

interdisciplinary evaluations, (d) Building a Strong Environment Program, an intervention program where most children enrolled in the program had been removed from or were at-risk of being removed from their homes for reasons of abuse or neglect; the program is designed to help parents learn skills that will improve their ability to provide appropriate care for their children and to remediate the child's developmental deficit, and (e) Infant Monitoring Project, an ongoing research project that monitors the developmental progress of infants who are at-risk for developmental delay because of biological or environmental factors.

Off-campus practica activities included public school placements as well as community-based early intervention programs such as (a) a program for teenage parents completing their high school diploma, daycare services including "baby groups" that modeled appropriate developmental interaction; (b) a program that served children from low income families who had experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and neglect, or who may be at-risk for abuse and neglect; (c) integrated preschools for young children with developmental delays; and (d) a day treatment program for children with severe emotional difficulties.

To support practica activities, a weekly methods seminar was used to guide and/or support the student. The methods seminar included instructional information as well as cooperative learning activities. Students were expected to apply seminar content and course work information within their practica sites. Content from the methods seminar and course work complimented the diverse practica activities which included collaboration with families, curriculum-based assessment, activity-based intervention, curriculum modification, interdisciplinary team participation, and consultation with community-based intervention programs.

Supervision Model

To maintain standards of professionalism and maximize student success in practica activities both a "traditional" and "professional development" supervision model were used within this program. The traditional supervision model included (a) weekly supervision and feedback from practica site supervisor; (c) weekly supervision and feedback by university supervisors; (d) ongoing contact between practica site and university supervisor; and (e) prepractica, midterm, and end-of-term meetings of

supervisors and students.

To assist students in becoming self-directed and reflective practitioners, rather than being dependent on external feedback or traditional supervision support, a professional development supervision model (Joyce & Showers, 1982, 1983) was implemented. This particular approach resulted in the use of reciprocal peer coaching activities. Peer coaching activities required students to apply a collegial approach to the analysis of their interventions and required that they learn how to systematically apply four elements: (a) discuss the theoretical rationale behind an instructional approach or strategy, (b) demonstrate the approach or strategy by an expert, (c) practice the new approach or strategy in a protected environment, and (d) integrate the new approach or strategy into a student's existing teaching repertoire. Specifically, within this program, peer coaching involved two or more students who worked together as a team. Students observed one another using newly learned intervention strategies and provided constructive feedback to each other under the supervision of an "expert" (instructor).

VII. LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS

The overall goal of preparing early intervention professionals to deliver quality services to young children who are at-risk or disabled and their families was met by this grant-funded program. Although the evaluation results from the five years of the Early Intervention Master's Degree programs reveal positive outcomes, there are limitations of the program evaluation. First, the quality of the program evaluations was diminished by the vacillating number of student evaluations completed across terms and years;

students did not always turn in forms or forms were not always fully completed. Second, some evaluation tools were subjective in nature because they involved a Likert rating system. To address this issue, this program designated time during student orientation and quarterly meetings to explain competency objectives and the Likert rating system to students. In addition, supervisors held weekly meetings and interpretation of the evaluation tool rating system was often an ongoing discussion. A final limitation was the changes in the student and supervisor evaluation tool between Years 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. As problems were detected with evaluation tools or as the field of early intervention advanced, instruments were changed to be responsive to problems and/or advances. To address this concern, program personnel always made changes with the understanding that it was important to keep evaluation content and rating systems as consistent as possible for data collection purposes. Because of vast differences between Year 1 and subsequent years, data are reported for Years 2-5 only.

VIII. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluation Areas and Tool Descriptions

This program evaluation explored three major areas: (1) students' progress, (2) meeting program objectives, and (3) program feedback. Table 3 contains the three evaluation areas and includes the evaluation strategy, the evaluation tool or procedure used, the data collection interval, and the person responsible for assuring the evaluation was completed properly. All evaluation instruments were designed to guide students through their program curriculum and to assist the program in addressing the three

evaluation areas that were identified for evaluation purposes.

The first evaluation area, students' progress, was monitored through examining student performance in didactic course work and practica activities. The purpose for evaluating the acquisition of didactic course work was to assure that students acquired the necessary informational/knowledge base to deliver quality early intervention services. Evaluating performance in practica was to assure that students developed a range of skills including typical/atypical development in infant-toddlers and preschool children, assessment, intervention design, implementation and evaluation, and team collaboration. This evaluation area employed a tool called the Combined Self-Rating/ Student Evaluation Instrument (Megrath & Straka, 1993). Each term the students were required to thoughtfully complete the instrument to monitor their progress in developing early intervention competencies. An accurate self-assessment provided students with important information to assist them in making informed decisions regarding their coursework and practicum experiences. Students used the tool to communicate with their supervisor regarding their most significant needs while supervisors used the tool to negotiate and design student activities and evaluate student progress.

Specifically, the tool was designed to measure knowledge and skill acquisition across program competency areas. By using the tool, students were able to take an active role in identifying their needs and further contract with their supervisor for objectives that were located under each competency area. For example, each term, the University supervisor and student used the student's self-rating data to develop a student-supervisor contract. The contract contained objectives and related activities that were responsive to identified needs (i.e., lower ratings). Upon student completion of

Table 3. Program's Evaluation Data

Evaluation Area	Strategy	Measurement Instrument/ Procedure	Interval	Person(s) Responsible
1. Student Progress	Progress in Course Work	Papers and Examinations	Mid and End of Each Term	Faculty
	Progress in Practicum	Combined Self-Rating/ Student Evaluation Instrument	Beginning of Each Term	Student
		Combined Self-Rating/Student Evaluation Instrument	Mid and End of Each Term	Student and Supervisor
		Formal Observation Tools	Weekly	Student and Supervisor
2. Meeting Program Objectives	Number of Students Completing Program	Exit Meeting	Annually	Program Director and Student
	Employment Status	Follow-Up Survey	One Year After Graduation	Student
3. Program Feedback	Student Feedback	Course Evaluation Form	End of Term	Student
		Evaluation of Instructor Form	End of Term	Student
		Practicum Evaluation Form	End of Term	Student
		Evaluation of Supervisor Form	End of Term	Student
		Follow-Up Survey	One Year After Graduation	Student
	Departmental Feedback	Formal Meeting	End of Term	Program Director, Faculty, and Supervisor
	Community Agency Feedback	Cooperating Professional Evaluation Survey	End of Term	Cooperating Professional

activities, the supervisor, in collaboration with the student, evaluated the student's performance by referring back to the contracted objectives.

The second evaluation area, meeting program objectives, was addressed by conducting informal exit meetings and examining the number of students who successfully completed the program each year. A Follow-Up Survey was used to provide information regarding the students' positions, professional affiliations, and activities 1 year after graduation. The survey also asked students to provide retrospective ratings of various program components and to suggest program modifications.

The third evaluation area, program feedback, included seeking information from students, faculty and staff, and cooperating professionals regarding program management and operation. Numerous measures, including Course Evaluation, Evaluation of Instructor, Practicum Evaluation, and Evaluation of Supervisor, were completed by students at the end of each term. These measures were designed to determine the students' satisfaction with different components of the program. For example, the Course Evaluation measure inquired about textbook reading, assignments, relevance of content to area of study, course materials, projects, and tests. The Practicum Evaluation measure sought feedback regarding both practicum placements (e.g., ability to complete competencies in site, application of information learned, opportunity to learn new and related information) and Practicum-Methods Seminar (e.g., match between sequence of instructional information/cooperative learning activities in the seminar and assigned practicum duties, and opportunity to complete competencies). The Supervisor Evaluation measure collected an array of

data such as availability of supervisor, supervisor response to concerns, amount of on-site supervisor observation, verbal/written/videotape feedback satisfaction, concrete suggestions for improving deficiency areas, supervisor knowledge and skill, encouragement to evaluate own performance, and general satisfaction with the quality of supervision.

In addition to these four tools, the Cooperating Professional Evaluation Survey was administered at the end of each term. This instrument measured the cooperating professional's (e.g., public school student supervisor) satisfaction with program coordination and student's performance. The instruments across the three evaluation areas were used to provide the program faculty with relevant program information to make term-by-term program modifications and changes.

Evaluation Results

The evaluation areas and instruments described in the above section were used to address six major evaluation questions. Table 4 contains the questions, the instrument(s) used to address each question, the instrument's format, and the analytical procedures used to answer each question.

Evaluation Question #1: Demographic Description of Participating Students

Evaluation data were collected from the 81 students who were enrolled. Fifty students were supported by the personnel preparation grant and 31 by other sources. The average age of students was approximately 34 years, and all but 4 students were

Table 4. Evaluation Questions and Corresponding Evaluation Instruments

Evaluation Question	*Evaluation Instrument*	*Format*	*Analysis of Results*
1. What are demographic characteristics of students?	Initial Survey	Multiple page form. Open-ended questions.	Totals collapsed over programs for Years 1 through 5.
2. How does program respond to individual needs of students?	Combined Self-Rating/Student Evaluation Instrument	Multiple page form. Likert-type response format. Course work, practicum, and optional objectives included.	Means and standard deviations collapsed over competency areas and programs, by academic year and term in program.
3. Does student performance in practicum improve over time?	Combined Self-Rating/Student Evaluation Instrument	Multiple page form. Likert-type response format. Course work, practicum, and optional objectives included.	Means and standard deviations collapsed over competency areas and programs, by academic year and term in program.
4. How satisfied are students with specific components of program?	Course Evaluation Form	One page form. Likert-type response format. Space for comments or suggests included.	Means and standard deviations for overall rating of course work, by term.
	Evaluation of Instructor Form	One page form. Likert-type response format. Space for comments or suggestions included.	Means and standard deviations for overall rating of instructors, by term.
	Practicum Evaluation Form	Multiple page form. Likert-type response format. Space for comments or suggestions included.	Means and standard deviations for overall rating of practicum, by term.
	Supervisor Evaluation Form	Multiple page form. Likert-type response format. Space for comments or suggestions included.	Means and standard deviations for overall rating of supervisor, by term.

Table 2, continued

Evaluation Question	*Evaluation Instrument*	*Format*	*Analysis of Results*
5. What are the most successful components of the overall program as judged by cooperating professionals?	Cooperating Professional Evaluation Form	One page form. Likert-type response format. Space for comments included.	Means and standard deviations for each item, by term
6. How does program respond to current and changing needs in personnel preparation?	Follow-Up Survey	Multiple page form. Open-ended and yes-no questions included.	Totals collapsed over programs for Years 1 through 5.

female. Before entering this program, students had worked in the following areas:public schools programs (16.9%), private schools (4.2%), colleges or universities (12.7%), community colleges (1.4%), hospital or residential settings (5.6%), and community agencies (16.9%). The remainder of students entered the preservice program directly after completing their baccalaureate degree (9.9%) or working in other non-educational settings (32.4%).

Positions held by students prior to program entry were teachers or interventionists (18.8%), parent consultants or educators (8.7%), consultants or specialists (13.0%), program coordinators or supervisors (14.5%), and aides in day care centers or classrooms (10.1%). The remainder of students (34.8%) listed occupations not directly related to the area of early intervention. Not surprisingly, these data suggested that many of the students had previous work experience closely related to their choice of graduate education.

Evaluation Question #2: Responsiveness of Program to Student Needs

At the beginning of each term, using the Combined Self-Rating/Student Evaluation Instrument, students rated their knowledge and skills in each competency area using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 5 contains a summary of the means and standard deviations of students' perceived progress for Years 3 and 4. The mean ratings shown in Table 5 generally indicate a consistent increase in students' perceived level of knowledge and skill development across terms in the program. On the whole, these rankings indicate that students believed their level of knowledge and skill development progressively improved across competency areas, and across terms in the program.

Evaluation Question #3: Change in Student Performance

The Combined Self Rating/Student Evaluation Instrument was also used to measure change in students' skill performance as determined by supervisor ratings. Students and supervisors rated objectives in each competency area at midpoint and the end of each term using the same 5-point Likert scale that students used. Table 6 contains the mean ratings and standard deviations of supervisor's rating of student progress for Years 3 and 4. Supervisors tended to rate students higher than students rated themselves, but again the data showed a general upward trend indicating that supervisors rated student performance as improving across terms in the program.

Evaluation Question #4: Student Satisfaction with Program Components

As indicated in Table 7, four evaluation domains addressed students' satisfaction with specific components of the program including course work, instructors, practica, and supervisors. Measures addressing each area were completed by students at the

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Ratings on Combined Self-Rating/Student Evaluation Instrument for Years 3 and 4

Year	Term 1		Term 2		Term 3		Term 4	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Year 3 (n = 16)	2.16	1.05	4.31	.83	3.64	.94	4.15	1.75
Year 4 (n = 15)	2.32	1.01	3.20	1.13	3.43	.86	4.26	.92

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of Supervisors' Ratings on Combined Self-Rating/Student Evaluation Instrument for Years 3 and 4

Year	Term 1		Term 2		Term 3		Term 4	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Year 3 (n = 16)	2.42	.69	4.80	.38	4.61	.55	4.67	.50
Year 4 (n = 15)	3.24	.94	--	--	4.14	.85	4.79	.46

Rating Scale:

5 = Meets the established criteria of each objective by demonstrating independence and by continuing to utilize available resources.

4 = Meets the established criteria of each objective. Additional learning experience/practice will enhance independence across settings with a variety of children.

3 = Meets established criteria of each objective with minimal assistance by demonstrating emerging independence in knowledge or skills. Additional learning experience/practice will enhance independence across settings with a variety of children.

2 = Meets established criteria in each objective with moderate assistance and supervision to demonstrate knowledge or skills. Additional learning experience/practice will enhance independence across settings with a variety of children.

1 = Does not meet established criteria of each objective. Student requires extensive assistance and supervision to demonstrate knowledge or skills.

Table 7. Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Overall Satisfaction Ratings of Course Work, Practica, Supervisors and Instructors for Years 2, 3, 4 and 5

Evaluation Area	**1995-1996**		**1996-1997**		**1997-1998**		**1998-1999**	
	Mean	Stdev	Mean	Stdev	Mean	Stdev	Mean	Stdev
1. Course Work	4.65 (n=31)	.17	4.43 (n=29)	.33	3.91 (n=29)	.82	--	--
2. Practicum	3.87 (n=19)	.22	4.13 (n=31)	.33	4.01 (n=29)	.13	4.13 (n=30)	.21
3. Supervisor	4.40 (n=29)	.50	4.58 (n=30)	.29	4.18 (n=29)	.26	4.26 (n=27)	.06
4. Instructor	3.99 (n=30)	.23	4.20 (n=31)	.29	4.00 (n=27)	.04	3.82 (n=19)	.12

Rating Scale: 5 = Excellent, 4 = Good, 3 = Moderate, 2 = OK, 1 = Poor

end of each term. Students were asked to rank items within each instrument using a 5-point Likert scale. To obtain mean ratings of overall satisfaction for course work, instructors, practica, and supervisors, a mean and standard deviation were calculated for each student on each measure and then combined to produce an overall student rating by term. Data for Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 are presented in Table 7 and indicate students' ranking reveal a high level of satisfaction across all program activities.

Evaluation Question #5: Program Evaluation by Cooperating Professionals

The Cooperating Professional Program Evaluation Survey was completed at the end of each term. Each item was rated using a 5-point Likert scale. A mean score was then calculated for each area. Higher numbers indicated greater satisfaction with the program. Means and standard deviations for each item were collapsed for academic Years 2, 3, and 4. Ninety percent, or 36 of the possible 40 items, were given mean ratings of good by cooperating professionals indicating a high level of satisfaction with (a) information and preparation by university staff prior to student's placement, (b) specification regarding practica supervisor role and responsibilities, (c) specification regarding the student's participation within practica site, (d) student's general performance within their program and the student's assistance to their program, (e) evaluation method used with students, and (f) timely and satisfactory resolution of placement concerns.

IX. PROGRAM IMPACT

Evaluation Question #6: Current and Changing Needs in Students

Program impact is partially addressed in the Evaluation Results section of VIII. Program Evaluation, (page 17).

A follow-up survey of students enrolled since Year 1 indicated that 75 students had successfully completed the program and graduated, and 6 who began the program dropped out. Of the 75 students who graduated, the majority currently held positions as teachers, interventionists, consultants, or specialists in public school settings and community agencies. Of the 6 students who began but did not complete the program, 3 indicated that the extensive course work and practica became too demanding and time consuming and the other 3 students transferred into other master's degree programs. Follow-up survey data reported that students felt the program's course work, practica assignments, and supervision effectively prepared them to work successfully within their current early intervention position.

Qualitative Program Reflections

In addition to reporting the quantitative results of this program evaluation, it is equally important to highlight the qualitative reflections regarding variables that increased the likelihood of positive program outcomes. It is posited that this program had five exemplary program features that warrant discussion.

First, this program fostered an interdisciplinary approach to the preparation of early intervention personnel. One of the most significant barriers to the delivery of quality services has been the lack of coordinated, interdisciplinary efforts (Gallagher,

1993; McCollum & Hughes, 1988; Woodruff & McGonigel, 1988). We believe that successful coordination of early intervention services can be facilitated if personnel from various disciplines understand and value the unique contribution that each professional brings to the team. This interdisciplinary focus begins with recruitment of students with diverse academic and experiential backgrounds (e.g., social workers, occupational therapists, nurses).

A second feature that was believed to lead to positive program outcomes was the emphasis on practica experiences and the use of a competency-based approach to prepare students. In this preparation program, students were required to complete a practica experience each term they were enrolled in the program. Students spent approximately 12 hours a week in structured practica experiences each term. Students chose practica sites that provided a range of experiences (i.e., a program for teenage parents and their infants, a center-based integrated preschool program, a community-based mainstream/child care program, and a joint program with the state child protection agency for children who are at-risk and their families). Within these sites, students were closely monitored and the cooperating professionals received training on a linked systems approach to intervention and were responsible for modeling appropriate assessment, intervention, and evaluation procedures. During the students' final practica experiences, they assumed more advanced roles, such as a lead interventionist or consultant. The students' final practica experiences were designed to build skills in modeling best practice and performing assessment and intervention skills independently.

The third feature that likely contributed to the positive outcomes was our emphasis on introducing students to a range of curricular approaches. This program began by providing students with information on various curricular approaches presently used in the field of early intervention, ranging from adult-directed to child-directed approaches. Each approach was compared and contrasted according to its theoretical perspective, content of instruction, and instructional format. Our goal was to provide students with enough information to formulate their own theoretical orientation to intervention with young children and families. Students were encouraged to discuss and practice how they might implement a variety of intervention strategies within settings using different theoretical orientations. We believe that providing future professionals with a broad conceptual base will enable them to be more effective in their service provision efforts with young children and families.

The fourth exemplary program feature was the use of adult learning strategies and a professional development model, which took into account the diverse entry level characteristics of students and their perceived needs. Adult learners require meaningful information, experiences, respect, reinforcement, application, feedback, and the freedom to self-direct (Glickman, 1990). Information was presented to students using a variety of approaches including concrete experiences (e.g., role plays and discussions), reflective experiences (e.g., lectures, readings, demonstrations, case analysis, and self-assessment), abstract conceptualization (e.g., lectures, theory readings, writing papers, study time alone, feedback), and active experimentation (e.g., projects, self-paced learning, simulation, problem solving, small group discussion).

The professional development model component of this program recognized

professionals as individuals who are at various stages of growth and development (Phillips & Glickman, 1991). Students were encouraged to gain technical knowledge necessary to assess and intervene with young children and also reflective knowledge. Reflective knowledge encourages abstract thinking and decision making and helps professionals understand the importance of identifying and solving problems (Diss, Buckley, & Pfau, 1992; Lasley, 1992). To blend the adult learning strategies and professional development model strategies, cooperative learning activities such as peer coaching were used to provide students with experiences that encouraged self-reflection and critical thinking skills.

Peer coaching activities had students working in pairs, supporting each other by providing feedback on the success of their intervention (Phillips & Glickman, 1991; Sparks, 1990). The peer coaching experiences afforded students the opportunity to come together in collegial groups, assume more complex roles, reflect together on their learning experiences, and take an important step toward lasting professional growth.

Summary

The various evaluation measures and qualitative reflections used to examine this master's early intervention personnel preparation program found that students and supervisors recognized growth in knowledge and skills across competency areas. Students reported consistent satisfaction with their course work, instructors, practica, and supervision. Students also reported overall satisfaction with the program. Cooperating professionals indicated a general satisfaction with students' performance and their interface with the university program. Follow-up surveys revealed that the majority of graduates felt well-prepared as they provided early intervention services

within their current place of employment.

This program used a comprehensive evaluation of personnel preparation program efforts. It is hoped that this program description and the evaluation procedures will serve as an impetus to others involved in personnel preparation efforts to begin to evaluate their programs in an objective manner, to accumulate their findings, and, when appropriate, to share these findings with others in the field.

X. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The master's level training program continues to offer personal preparation at the University of Oregon. A continuous improvement system based on evaluation findings supported by this grant allows the University of Oregon to continuously modify and improve the Early Intervention Master's Program.

XI. ASSURANCE STATEMENT

A full copy of this final report has been sent to the ERIC/OSEP Special Project of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children. In addition, a copy of the title page and executive summary have been sent to the NEC*TAS Coordinating Office.

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